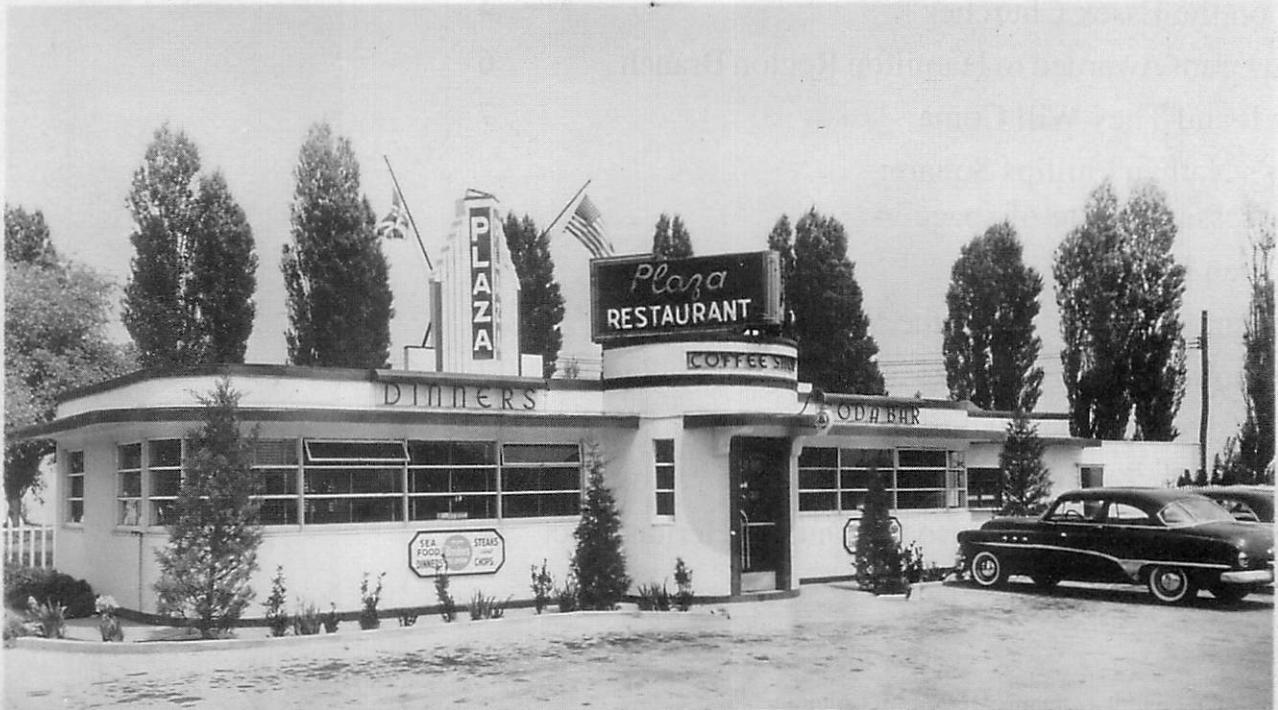


ACORN



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The Journal of The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario



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ACORN

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From the Editor

Dan Schneider



Did we mention that 2003 is the 70th anniversary of the ACO?

It is surprising that an organization so concerned with preserving our history and heritage sometimes can be a little neglectful of its own history. Does it have something to do with our generally self-deprecating character as Canadians that we tend to underplay our achievements and overlook significant milestones?

In honour of this estimable anniversary, here are a couple of my favourite ACO references. They are taken from an unpublished history of the Ontario Heritage Foundation (from the early 1980s, author unknown).

"It was hoped that the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, founded in 1933, would attract to its cause leaders of society who could lobby governments effectively and raise large amounts of money. But few of these became more than honorary patrons for a time and it was left principally to a small band of ardent amateurs to keep the Conservancy going. Its one resounding triumph was the refurbishing of the magnificent Barnum House in Grafton, a discovery of Professor Eric Arthur [the driving force behind the founding of the Conservancy]."

"The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario ... had a long debate in 1954 as to whether it should fold up. Its pattern had been to meet at the Grange in the Art Gallery of Ontario at tea time, which was fine for its leisured members but not conducive to attracting younger members who had to stay at work until five o'clock or trek in long distances from out of town. The vote went narrowly in favour of continuing operations. The president, Mackenzie Waters, whose architectural practice was chiefly in Georgian-modern houses, was replaced by a junior in his firm named Napier Simpson who had been acting as secretary for some time and would one day play a major role both as a restoration architect and as a board member of the Ontario Heritage Foundation. Ever since he was a student, Simpson had biked around

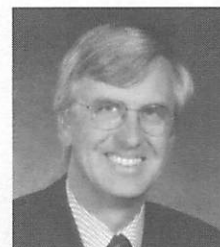
interesting old places in Ontario such as Prince Edward County with his notebook and sketch pad in hand to record the buildings he discovered."

I leave it to readers to draw their own conclusions about what has changed and what stays the same over our organization's long and interesting history.

Take care for the commonweale. And take a bow, ACO!

The Provincial ACO v. the Branches

Christopher Borgal, ACO President



At our last Board meeting, a question was asked with respect to the role the Provincial Board plays versus that of the branches.

There is no question that the bulk of ACO activities are developed and presented by the branches and that the main office has had, at best, a limited role in the co-ordination of the branches (beyond getting together every second month with branch representatives to disseminate information). Indeed, some may feel that the primary function of the Board is to develop the annual dinner (which has become an important fundraising effort for the provincial organization) and to assist in the production of the annual conference (more of which later).

Yet, in reality, the provincial organization is of vital importance to the ACO branches for a number of reasons, including:

- *enabling the ACO to sit at the table when government changes are proposed, for example, amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act.* Being one of the few organizations directly contacted with respect to such changes means that the ACO can have, and has had, a profound impact on policy affecting heritage properties throughout Ontario. Indeed, even the opposition parties rely on our input to allow them the ability to make informed comments during Question Period. Due to our stature as a provincial organization, empowered by our

branches, we are wired into government policy in a manner that no local branch can be and we have listened-to access to the highest levels of government.

- *allowing us to provide a more significant impact when branches are fighting for their heritage.* When members of local branches attempt to influence owners, councils and developers (or even the OMB) in order to save heritage properties from destruction, they are sometimes ignored as irrelevant activists at best and as heritage “crackpots” at worst. Familiarity in a local community can breed contempt and can reduce the impact of the local organization. However, when that organization is known to be backed by a provincial body (which can provide letters of support, expert consultants, or a visit by a

organization like the ACO.

- *allowing networking with other local, provincial, national and international preservation organizations.* Many of those on the Board and throughout the organization have direct links to other heritage organizations, which range from politically activist groups to state-of-the-art technology of restoration associations. The dissemination of information from these contacts happens at the Board level and can filter down to the branches in a variety of ways.

- *establishment and maintenance of policies for the organization as a whole.* Operational manuals and procedures are developed and updated by the ACO office. Local branches should use and follow these in order to permit each to operate in an efficient and effective manner.

There are many other reasons why the provincial body is vital to the ACO, and these reasons are known to many. In the coming months, we will be opening a dialogue with the branches to explore a variety of other potential benefits, including:

- *development of a consistent “look” for the ACO from branch to branch.* The ability to

attract new members and new branches will be examined in relation to our provincial exposure to general members of the public. People don’t tend to join organizations they don’t know about!

- *offering branches advice in administering their accounts.* This will be of great benefit to local treasurers who may find the tracking of memberships and dues overwhelming. Our treasurer, Clara So, has already offered to visit the branches to assist in the preparation of statements (which is vital to the maintenance of our charitable status).

- *development of more programs such as PreservationWorks!* which will provide

more exposure to the ACO across Ontario.

- *encouragement of branches which have been taking a less than active role.* This may take the form of suggestions related to membership drives, new initiatives, and relief for overburdened local executives.

- *collaboration with other organizations in areas where we have common interests.* The proposed joint conference with Community Heritage Ontario in Hamilton next year will provide maximum exposure to the programs offered by the ACO to representatives of municipal heritage committees (LACACs) across Ontario. These committees are arms of local government and are therefore sometimes unable to take activist stands related to demolition issues. The ACO can do just that – and may be just the organization that LACAC members see as needed for issues in their communities.

In July, members of the Board will be having a “brainstorming” session to develop some of these ideas further. If you have any ideas, or comments, I would like to hear from you!

Update on the Essex Churches

André Chenier

Divisional Court hearings

In recent editions of ACORN, you were informed that five members of a workgroup called SOS-Églises undertook legal action in late October of last year to stop the demolition of a 120-year-old church in St-Joachim, a small French-Canadian village in Southwestern Ontario. Last November, the Ontario Superior Court suspended the demolition permit in order to allow the five individuals to contest decisions made by the municipal council of Lakeshore with respect to this issue. The matter was later referred to the Ontario Divisional Court, which heard the case May 6 and 7 at Osgoode Hall in Toronto.

The legal challenge included two points. The five applicants claimed that council violated the constitutional rights of the



Postcard showing the C.P.R. Station in Port Arthur (now Thunder Bay), Ontario, postally used 1917. See article on page 6.

Illustration courtesy Ken Elder

board member to demonstrate solidarity with the local group), the position of the branch is greatly enhanced with the result that, in identifiable situations, battles have been won which may otherwise have been lost.

- *providing services on a provincial basis, such as PreservationWorks!* Such programs allow local branches and property owners access to a network of specialists that might otherwise be unavailable. In the past week, I have given speeches in Ottawa and Windsor on behalf of the ACO, the goal of which was to inspire people to think of alternate reasons why we need to preserve our heritage. Response to such requests would not be possible without an

local official language minority when it refused to consider the designation of the church as a historical site without taking into account the impact of this decision on that community. The same claim was made about the municipal decision to issue a demolition permit.

The hearing lasted two days. Ronald Caza, the lawyer for SOS-Églises, emphasized the importance of architectural conservation for a cultural and linguistic community living in a minority situation. The applicants were supported by the Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada, who had obtained the status of intervener in the proceedings. The Diocese of London was an intervener on the side of the municipality.

The three Divisional Court judges have not rendered their decision at this time. It may be some time before we learn of the results of the court action. But the members of SOS-Églises who drove to Toronto to attend the hearing were very encouraged by what they heard.

The major focus of attention was the motion passed by the Municipality of Lakeshore restricting to owners the right to propose heritage site designations. Queried by one of the judges as to whether this motion was not in fact going against the intent of the Ontario Heritage Act, the municipal lawyers said that non-owners could make such proposals at any time. "Yes, of course, they could, but would Council listen?" asked one of the judges!

It would be foolhardy to anticipate what the decision of the three judges will be based on courtroom questions and answers. However, Paul Chauvin, a member of SOS-Églises, was optimistic. "From the nature of the back-and-forth debate between the judges and the lawyers, we have the satisfaction to know that the main issues were identified and examined. If we lose, we will at least know that it was not because of a failure on our part to clearly make our points. Maître Caza truly did a masterful job. He is worth every penny we paid for his services!"

All we can do now is wait to see whether the judges believe that our case is supported by current legislation and the constitutional precedent that was established

by the Montfort Hospital decision (three years ago, the Ontario government had to reverse its decision to close the only French language hospital in Canada west of Quebec when it was determined by the Ontario Court of Appeal that such a closure would unduly affect the official language minority). Through the current legal action, SOS-Églises hopes to confirm the constitutional obligations of elected bodies to consider the impact of their decision on the official language minority (English in Quebec, French elsewhere in Canada.)

TVO's Studio 2

The Essex churches debate is gaining increasing media attention. SOS-Églises was delighted to hear that the very popular TVO public affairs program, Studio 2, was sending a production crew to do a report on the debate. The crew, under the direction of field producer Robert Prowse, spent two days in the area and interviewed people representing both sides of the issue. The program was aired on May 28 and 29. Again, members of SOS-Églises were very encouraged by the way Mr. Prowse covered the situation.

There were touching moments in the report. Elmira Sylvestre, an 88-old artist, said that if there comes a day when the St-Joachim church is threatened by bulldozers, she would station herself in front of the church in her wheelchair so that "the bulldozer will have to get me first!"

The end of the report was poetic. The camera zoomed-in on a wonderful painting of the church made by Elmira. In the background played the haunting "Un Canadien Errant," French Canada's own "Amazing Grace." The producer then added as a voice-over David Tremblay's plea to preserve the churches so that they will be there to remind future generations of the 300-year presence of French Canadian communities in this part of Canada.

Radio-Canada's Second Regard

Second Regard is what could be consid-

ered a "flagship" program of Radio-Canada. It is a religious/spiritual affairs program that has been recognized as one of the network's finest for the many decades it



SOS-Églises members in Osgoode Hall courtroom May 7, 2003

Photo: Le Rempart

has aired from coast to coast. The producer recently called SOS-Églises to explore the possibility of using the Essex situation as a case study. The project is still at the "under consideration" stage, but should it be implemented, the SOS-Églises cause would be presented to a national audience through a highly respected channel.

Appeal of rezoning decision

In February, the Town of Lakeshore municipal council approved an amendment request from the Diocese of London to rezone as institutional a piece of farmland currently designated as agricultural. This land was given to the Diocese for the construction of the church that would replace the two village churches in Pointe-aux-Roches and St-Joachim. Members of SOS-Églises and ACO Windsor Region Branch attended the two public meetings on the topic and made themselves heard in opposition to the request.

However, Municipal Council unanimously approved the amendment request. A member of SOS-Églises and of the ACO Windsor Region Branch lodged an appeal of the decision with the Ontario Municipal Board. A small workgroup composed of SOS-Églises, ACO Windsor Region Branch and a lawyer working pro bono are preparing the arguments against the decision. The date for the appeal hearing has not yet been determined.

SOS-Églises research marathon!

One of the many collateral benefits of a crisis is that they are sometimes wonderful learning opportunities. One member of SOS-Églises, Jérôme Baillargeon, whose family ties with the St-Joachim church go



Jérôme Baillargeon, SOS-Églises
researcher extraordinaire

Photo: Pat Malicki

back to its construction days, has been passionately foraging the internet for information in support of our efforts.

The results are overwhelming! Jérôme has amassed thousands of pages of information directly or indirectly related to built heritage conservation. To quantify the extent of his efforts, consider that he has had to use some 20 large ring binders to contain his internet printouts. They range from the Vatican's policies and procedures in support of cultural values throughout the Catholic world, to the Diocese of London's 20 years facilities planning guide, to you name it! All of it connected one way or another to our cause! Hopefully, this considerable body of information will be

put to full use, not only by us, but also by others in a similar situation.

Donations welcome!

Donations are still needed to cover legal costs for the Divisional Court and pending Ontario Municipal Board hearings. So far about \$40,000 has been raised and the legal bill is around \$90,000. Donations can be sent care of ACO Windsor Region Branch, Box 911, St-Joachim, Ontario N0R 1S0. Many thanks!

Trillium Grant Awarded to Hamilton Region Branch

Ann Gillespie

The Hamilton Region Branch is pleased to announce that in December 2002 we were awarded a grant of \$21,700 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to create a website with a searchable database for historic postcards of the Hamilton area.

The postcards are drawn largely from the extensive and valuable collection of Ken Elder, a semi-retired conservation architect with the federal government in Ottawa. A native of Hamilton but long-time resident of Ottawa, Ken has been collecting and studying historic postcards published throughout (and to some extent beyond) North America since the 1970s. To date, his collection exceeds 25,000 postcards,

including close to 1500 with images on a wide range of themes relating to the former City of Hamilton and to some degree the surrounding municipalities that are now part of the amalgamated City of Hamilton. The majority of Ken's postcards date from 1900 to 1940 and some are quite rare. Not surprisingly, given his professional career, many of the images document street-scapes, built structures and gardens, which will be of special interest to Conservancy members and other individuals engaged in architectural research and preservation.

Ken has been busy scanning and dating his Hamilton postcards for the database as well as preparing content for the various web pages, which will include a history of postcards from a Canadian perspective. First-time visitors to the website will be able to view a slide show of pre-selected images that will give them an overview of the subject matter covered.

Developing the functional and graphic design elements of the website has been a collaborative effort involving web designer Chris Vogal (Vigraph Computer and Graphic Services), Ken Elder, Mary Kramer and Ann Gillespie (Gillespie-Kramer Heritage Consulting) with input from fellow ACO Hamilton branch members. The final design and content of the Home and other Web pages are still being developed. Construction of the database is completed and entry of the data is underway. Once the website is on-line, links will be provided to and from various other related websites, including of course the Hamilton Region Branch and ACO (www.hips.com/ACO).

ACODINNER2003

ACO Dinner 2003 will be held Friday, November 14 in the Great Hall at Hart House, University of Toronto. This should be an even more exciting and fun-filled event than last year! Call the ACO at (416) 367-8075 for more information and check our website www.hips.com/ACO for details as they become available.

Last year's event was largely successful because of the generous contribution of donors, guests, and sponsors. If you, or any of your acquaintances, would like to participate this year, call Dianna Cook at the number above.

And mark your calendars now!

Restore It and They Will Come

Gary R. Tetzlaff

The Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA) lived up to its name and augmented its reputation with the official opening of its restored railway station in Kingsville on May 31, 2003.

This is the same field stone and slate-roofed railway station which restoration architect Nicholas Hill wrote about in ACORN (Spring 2000) soon after being hired for the restoration project four years ago.

Hiram Walker built the specially designed station in 1889 for the Lake Erie, Essex and Detroit River Railway at a cost of \$8,000. It was intended as a "front door" for the guests of the Mettawas Hotel (1889-1903) in Kingsville. (Note the correct name for the hotel which appeared as "Mattawa" in the ACORN article as it also did in the Conservation Review Board report in 1994.) Now the restored adaptive-reuse depot embellishes the southern reaches of the part of the Trans-Canada Trail known as the Chrysler Canada Greenway.

Several current and past members of the Windsor Region Branch of the ACO were in attendance for this auspicious photo-op, including President Pat Malicki.

A tenant for the upstairs office was announced, leaving the main floor open for other possible community functions and events. The Hon. Susan Whelan, MP (Minister for International Cooperation), MPP Bruce Crozier, Essex County Warden and Mayor of Kingsville Patrick O'Neil all spoke elegant words, reaffirming the importance of this building to the heritage of this part of Ontario and Canada. The operative word throughout these speeches was "partnerships," by which many funding sources were solicited and accessed in order to complete the ambitious project. Human Resources Development Canada and the Trillium Foundation were singled out for their sizeable funding contributions. Significant

additional local assistance came from the Kingsville Lions Club.

But the breadth of local support for this project is inestimable since it spans a 25 year period, several attempts to preserve the structure before its 1989 partial demolition, and two costly last-ditch efforts by The Society for the Preservation of Kingsville Antiquities (SPRESKA) and Save Our Station.

Appreciation was expressed for this seemingly tireless body of volunteers who convinced the town council to temporarily preserve the station in 1993 by applying the Ontario Heritage Act (recall that railway stations and railways are ordinarily regulated by federal law) against the will of the railway owner. The small active body of people in SPRESKA, including their founding president, the late Elizabeth Shaughnessy, were rewarded with an Ontario Heritage Act designation in June 1994 after more than nine



Kingsville Railway Station

Photo: Pat Malicki

A picture of the station can also be seen at www.erca.org/ca/greenway/brochure/main.html

secure the expertise and funding for its restoration as an adjunct to the Greenway.

Special words of thanks were expressed for the efforts of the late Nick Hill, who contributed much more than his professional services. He was a persuasive advocate for keeping the restoration efforts historically and architecturally accurate, despite the financial costs and the delays that the extra funding would necessitate.

Back in December 1999, when he took receipt of SPRESKA's collection of doors, brackets and dormer windows (stored in the home of Hazel Tregenza since 1993), Nick Hill's spirits soared. The \$8,000 that SPRESKA had raised and paid in 1989 to recover these architectural elements had not only saved nearly \$30,000 in reproduction costs, but also lent significant authenticity to the restoration plan. Nick Hill, Pat Malicki, Gary Tetzlaff and ERCA employee Tim Byrne shared in the work of transferring more than 60 original items to the station on a rainy December day, and shared their sore backs from lifting the magnificent solid red oak doors.

The fruits of this ACO friend's efforts, together with those of a legion of volunteers, skilled contractors and ERCA employees (mostly unnamed at this event) will be appreciated for decades to come with the opening of this building. Come and visit.



Hazel Tregenza of Save Our Station addresses guests at the opening of the restored station on May 31, 2003

Photo: Pat Malicki

months of intense, concentrated effort and a Conservation Review Board hearing as well.

In 1995 the "right buyer" (ERCA) for the rail corridor thus "inherited" a building with a heritage designation and set about to

Toronto's Nathan Phillips Square: A "necessary waste of space"

Sharon Vattay

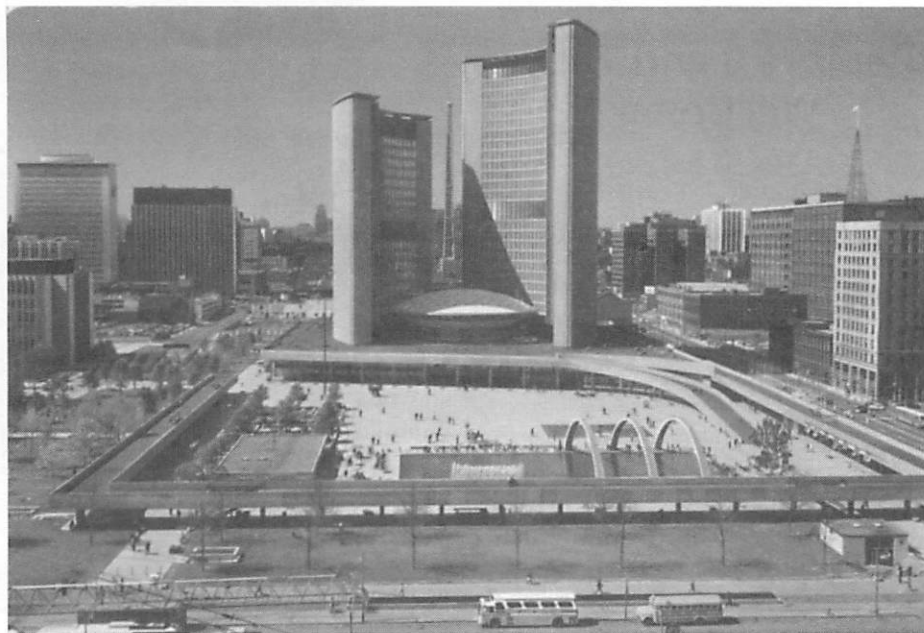
When officially opened in September 1965, Toronto's New City Hall presented to the city not only a modern edifice to support municipal government, but also a civic square of unprecedented generosity in terms of space.

While cities and towns of every age have seen fit to make provision for open places that would promote social encounters and serve to conduct public affairs, Toronto had been lacking in this basic need. This was a remarkable oversight especially given that Toronto derives from a Huron word that means place-of-meeting. One need only consider the city's earlier city halls (two of which are still standing today) to notice the lack of a civic square or forecourt to the municipal buildings. Why the city never considered this important piece of urban planning can only be explained by measures of economy. Space was at a premium in the growing centre, and although the city fathers had grand aspirations of being an urbane British colony, the lofty ideals rarely came to fruition.

The opening of Nathan Phillips Square thus served as a momentous occasion in modern urban planning in Toronto. By setting aside a large piece of land to serve as an open space, the city revealed its desire to uphold an ancient prototype of civic planning. Open space holds great importance as is evidenced in its continuation throughout the history of the urban fabric, from the Greek agora and Roman forum through to the Medieval and Renaissance piazza.

Inception of Nathan Phillips Square

The square came about because of a City Council recommendation in 1956 for an open architectural competition for the design of a new Civic Square and City Hall. A jury of five (all leading architects on the worldwide architectural scene) ultimately



Toronto City Hall and Nathan Phillips Square from a 1960s postcard

Illustration courtesy Sharon Vattay

chose the submission of Finnish architect Viljo Revell, which was considered the most imaginative and original in concept. The professional advisor and chairman of the jury was Eric Arthur.

Revell's proposal was the most expressive of all entries, clearly defining the governmental functions through the use of varied forms: the podium (containing the public areas), the office towers (containing the administrative functions) and the floating saucer dome (containing the council chamber). A fourth element was also explicitly designated in the competition conditions – a civic square, to be named after the mayor who implemented the project.

In Revell's winning design the building itself was placed at the northern-most portion of the 12 acre site. What is so significant is that the entire building takes up only three and one-half acres of the 12 acre total – the rest was given over to the open civic space. In so placing the building, Revell's design allowed for a clear view of the "old" city hall (1889-1900 by E.J. Lennox). This factor was not lost on the jury, who saw the placement as a gesture respecting the city's architectural past.

Revell, as an architect, was a functionalist and a rationalist, meaning his solutions to design were based on logic and lucidity, and his Civic Square was very carefully

shaped in its broad lines. The square was defined by a raised walkway that wrapped around the east, south and western edges of the space. In its original form, green space filled the area between the walkway and the city sidewalks, while further rectangular patches of green offset the reflecting pool. Three concrete arches placed asymmetrically over the reflecting pool recalled the geometric forms of the building itself.

Design issues

Since its unveiling (and even prior to its completion) there were critics, and now, with the square facing possible future alterations at the hands of the present city council, perhaps it is a good time to review both the pros and cons of the design.

Colonnade/elevated walkway

One of the most discussed elements of the original design is the encircling "colonnade," which is connected to the podium on its southeast corner but stops short of a complete ambulatory before the southwest corner. The critics argued that the elevated walkway cut the square off from the city and truncated crucial views of the building from Queen Street (an argument you still hear today, especially from tourists trying to photograph the building).

But one can easily argue that this element

visually contains the vast square, ordering an otherwise ambiguous boundary between the civic space and the street. Its practicality lies in the provision of shelter to the citizen, whether from rain or sun. In addition, although unfortunately closed off now due to reasons of safety and security, the elevated walkway originally offered unparalleled views of the entire complex for those citizens attending the informal or ceremonial events in the square.

Certainly a civic space can exist without boundaries; however, one that is so delineated allows for a more unified sense – one that is clearly defined.

Landscaping

Within the boundaries of the surrounding colonnade, the square was a clean and open space, the reflecting pool, with its curved concrete arches and fountain, serving as the focal point. Planting was kept to a minimum. This was, in fact, a major criticism from the outset by the jury members. As detailed in Eric Arthur's report, dated 25 September 1958, the jury members felt that "a great deal of the landscaping, trees and surface features must be worked out to provide the necessary human interest." The two jury members who had reservations about several aspects of Revell's design called the square "a somewhat stark design," and suggested that it could be given greater landscape interest and amenity, and a more human scale.

Yet, the "starkness" of the square can conversely be argued to contribute to its clarity. The cleanness of the form and space is typical of the modernist aesthetic that gave rise to Revell's design and played a dominant role in the architecture of the 1950s and 1960s worldwide. One need only compare another modernist structure in Toronto of the same era, the Toronto Dominion Centre of 1963-1969 by Mies van der Rohe, to see that the open space becomes not a luxury but rather an integral part of the design. The large, interlinked plazas

between Mies's three structures that together formed the original centre were part of the spatial conception as a whole.

Changes to the Square

The conceptual clarity of Nathan Phillips Square was dramatically compromised by the introduction of the Peace Garden, a commemorative monument meant as a physical expression of the desire of Torontonians for world peace. Constructed in 1984, it replaced an original large planting bed to the north-east of the reflecting pool. The Toronto architect and editor, Marco Polo, writing in the *Canadian Architect*, called this "a well-intentioned but clumsy intrusion into an otherwise successful urban space."

If the pavilion and plantings of the Peace Garden can be seen as intrusive, one can

io Heritage Act. Council directed that an assessment of the needs and wants of internal and external stakeholders, special interest groups, and the general public be conducted. The selection of a new design, chosen through a competition, was set for the fall of 2001.

In their own report, the city noted that the square, in its original form, served the citizens of Toronto and visitors to the city well, exceeding everyone's original expectations by becoming "the" meeting place in the city. But this success seems to be its downfall. The square has become a site for large music concerts and festivals and the priority now is to build a permanent stage to replace makeshift platforms that are regularly being constructed and dismantled. The main reason for adding a permanent structure onto Revell's clean, minimalist square is that the change in design will result in savings in the costs of staging events.

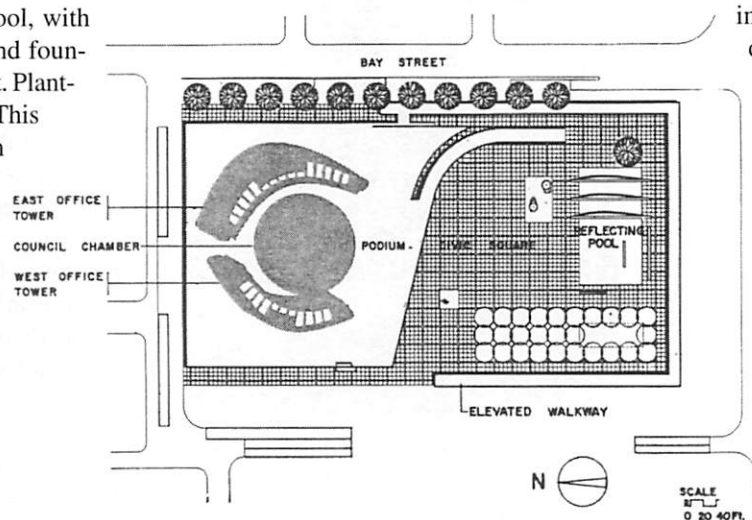
Ironically, it is these same budgetary concerns that have shelved the issue, for the moment at least. Unfortunately, economic factors more often than not dictate whether our built environment is to be preserved.

Yet one can argue that open, unaltered spaces are not only valid but a necessity. If one considers the original conditions of the competition, Nathan Phillips Square not only met, but exceeded the requirements. The conditions

read: "Primarily, the Square will be landscaped open space of great beauty serving as a forecourt to the City Hall and as an open space for the pleasure of citizens." It was not to be a park. It was not to be a permanent entertainment venue with a stage structure. Rather, it was to be an open space, a forecourt to the City Hall.

This requirement, set out in the 1950s, surely is still what is required today in the twenty-first century, especially when the city is becoming more and more congested with buildings and transportation routes.

Nathan Phillips Square continues to serve



Site plan of Toronto City Hall (from the Journal of the American Concrete Institute, December 1965)

imagine what would be the impact on the space as a whole of a permanent stage structure, a proposal currently being considered. In December 2000 the city established a Reference Group for the Nathan Phillips Square Design Competition, responding to a report of the previous year by the Chief Administrative Officer titled "Civic Spaces Associated with Civic Centres." Council confirmed the use of Nathan Phillips Square as the City of Toronto's premier civic square and event venue and approved funding to hold a design competition to examine the redesign and redevelopment of the square, a space which is designated as significant under the Ontar-

the physical and theoretical purposes that it was originally intended to serve. Open spaces serve their purpose only when they are open. And perhaps we should take heed of the assertion by the eminent European modern architect, theorist and designer, Marcel Breuer, who in 1955, just one year before Revell conceived the square, wrote: "It is time that the open square regained its importance – the square as a symbol of civic pride and as a tool of civic life: a necessary waste of space."

Doors Open Hamilton

Ann Gillespie

On May 3 and 4, 2003, the City of Hamilton participated for the first time in the province-wide Doors Open Ontario event launched by the Ontario Heritage Foundation in 2002.

The Organizing Committee, headed by Hamilton LACAC member Donna Reid, comprised representatives of the city, Tourism Hamilton and various heritage groups including the ACO Hamilton Region Branch (Ken Coit and Ann Gillespie). Thanks to excellent media coverage, notably by the Hamilton Spectator and Toronto Star, the hard work of a small, dedicated team of volunteers (special credit to Donna Reid) and the financial support of the City of Hamilton, Tourism Hamilton and various heritage organizations and individuals (including four city councillors), the event was a great success.

Approximately 7000 visitors were counted citywide: most came from the Hamilton area but some traveled from nearby municipalities including Guelph, Cambridge, Brantford, Kitchener-Waterloo and Toronto. The

event included sites in all of the communities representing the former municipalities of the Hamilton-Wentworth Region and showcased buildings, small and large, of architectural and historical significance, as well as the creative recycling of more ordinary buildings.

The 1850s Gothic Revival villa and picturesque garden on the Mountain brow, known as Auchmar, which has been turned



Postcard showing the old city hall in Hamilton, Ontario, postally used 1906. See article on page 6.

Illustration courtesy Ken Elder

into a set for the on-going filming of a TV series, *Strange Days at Blake Holsey High*, attracted 1500 visitors, the highest number recorded at any site. The second highest attendance was the Tivoli Theatre, where 700 visitors came to see the ornate "Italian Renaissance" interior of its 1920s

auditorium, Hamilton's only surviving example of a grand vaudeville theatre/movie palace. About 300 people stepped across the threshold of the relatively humble home of escaped slave Enerals Griffin and his wife, who purchased the one-and-one half storey frame dwelling and 50 acres of land in the Ancaster area in 1834. It has been restored by the Hamilton Conservation Authority as a house museum and site for interpreting African-Canadian history.

The Valley City Manufacturing Co. building in Dundas was also a crowd drawer, with 281 visitors on the Sunday. President Robert Crockford and seven of his employees gave guided tours throughout the day. Led by Mr. Crockford, our group was taken through a modern manufacturing facility for the wood components of custom furnishings supplied to laboratories, courtrooms, hospitals, etc. The large demand for research laboratory furniture in the rapidly growing biotechnology sector on the eastern seaboard of the U.S. now makes up 70% of the company's business. The firm is located in a mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century factory complex, which encompasses the original two-storey stone structure built in 1846 as John Gartshore's Dundas Iron Foundry and Machine Shop. In the early twentieth century the company gained a reputation for its exquisitely carved woodwork for church interiors, including the impressive sanctuary of St. Paul's United Church, rebuilt in 1933 (also a Doors Open site).

Directly across the street from Valley City is an unassuming one-storey brick building erected in the 1950s to house a bowling alley. In 1999, it was acquired by Vermuelen-Hind Architects and imaginatively converted to a stunning open-concept studio, where most of the original wood bowling lanes were retained as part of the new flooring. As word got around that this



****ACORN Deadline****

Fall 2003 Issue (includes branch reports) - October 1

Contributors - please mark your calendars now!



was a site not to be missed by anyone who made it to Dundas, they had an overwhelming response with a total of 300 visitors over the two days. Likewise, McCallum Sather Architects, in downtown Hamilton, were able to show off their bright, spacious new office quarters in a 1915 factory building, purchased in 2000 and renovated in accordance with the firm's commitment to sustainable design principles. Another exciting adaptive re-use project – still a work in progress.

All in all a great weekend blessed with two days of perfect weather!

Doors Open Hamilton proved to be a wonderful complement to the Hamilton Region Branch's guided walking and bus tours, which focus on cultural landscapes, streetscapes and building exteriors, and also the scheduled tours of the Hamilton Cemetery offered by Historical Perspectives, the partnership of Robin McKee and Donna Reid (both Hamilton LACAC members). For Doors Open, Robin offered a shorter version of their regular two-hour tour, which attracted over 300 visitors.

Planning for next year's event will get underway in September. The first Doors Open event was a learning experience for the Organizing Committee, which hopes to build on this year's success.

[Editor's note: the events of participating Doors Open communities for 2003 can be found on the Doors Open Ontario web-site: www.doorsopenontario.on.ca and in the Ontario Heritage Foundation's free guidebook, *Discover Ontario's Heritage Treasures*.]

The Coming Resurrection of the Woodruff House

Selena Forsyth

Pete and Jane see an ad

Perusing a copy of ACORN in the fall of 2000, Port Hope ACO members Peter and Jane Rumgay saw an ad that gave them goose bumps. The ad read:



The Woodruff House prior to its dismantling in 1970

Photo courtesy Peter and Jane Rumgay

FOR SALE

The historic WOODRUFF HOUSE, circa 1827, from St. Davids, Ontario.

This is a full two-storey oak timber-frame house with three additions (about 2000 sq. ft.) The main house is a five over five bay front with end gables. There are four neo-classic fireplaces, plus a large cooking and baking hearth in the kitchen. Architectural drawings were made when the house was dismantled in 1970. The building has been stored under cover.

The house is featured in The Ancestral Roof, page 62, with photo.

The ad then gave the price and the owner's phone number.

A little research revealed that the house advertised for sale was one featured in every book on early Ontario architecture published prior to 1970 when the building was dismantled. Pete called the number.

William builds a house

Flashback to 1795 when Ezekial Woodruff, who had served in the American Revolutionary army but became disillusioned with

the American Congress, moved his wife, Sarah, and five children from Connecticut to Niagara. Their three sons, Richard, Henry and William, all served in the war of 1812, with William fighting in every major battle on the Niagara Frontier. After the war, William went into partnership with his older brother Richard as merchants and millers in St. David's, a village near St. Catherine's. The Woodruff brothers would all become leading citizens of the village. William was elected to the Upper Canada Assembly in 1829, was made a director of the Welland Canal Company and later served as Magistrate for St. David's.

When William returned from the war he began construction of a modest post and beam house in St. David's. He built it around a huge fireplace and bake oven that had survived a fire on July 19, 1814, when the entire village of St. David's was ordered burned by American commander Colonel Stone. By 1827 William had prospered and his family had grown in size. This necessitated an addition to the house – and this time the building was anything but modest!

Built in the loyalist, Georgian style, the house had ten-inch, hand squared, oak beams and uprights, all mortised and ten-

Hugh Anson-Cartwright Books is moving after 37 years!

Tamara Anson-Cartwright

Often as part of my work at the Ontario Ministry of Culture, I reply to general enquiries or provide advice to municipal heritage committee members for a heritage site or library restoration project and, when introduced, I am asked, "Are you related to Hugh?"



Hugh Anson-Cartwright

I reply that he is my uncle and from there has begun many an interesting conversation about his book business (visits to his wonderful shop), library collections and the knowledge and kindness he has shared with people over the many years.

After 37 years at the same location, 229 College Street, across the street from the University of Toronto, Hugh Anson-Cartwright is moving the book business to his new home. He will continue to buy fine books, maps and prints in all fields, and maintain his speciality of valuing book collections and archives. As a lifetime member of the ACO, Hugh looks forward to serving old and new clients. Fine books on architecture, landscape design and historic photographs are always of interest.

The shop closes the end of July 2003. The new location of Hugh Anson-Cartwright Books is P.O. Box 317, Station P, 704 Spadina Avenue, Toronto M5S 2S8. Open by appointment only. Phone/fax: 416 979-2441. Web address: www.ansoncartwright.com; email: hugh@ansoncartwright.com

done and held firmly in place by wooden pegs; the roof rafters and floor joists were of black walnut; the entire house was covered in pine clapboard. Its interior features included pine floors and moldings, a cherry staircase, six-panel, pine doors, twelve-over-twelve windows and four extremely rare, exquisite, Adam period fireplaces made of hand-made brick with white pine mantles; each fireplace had a blanket warming cupboard.

The house leaves home in pieces

The house fell on hard times after being rented out for about 60 years and was sold out of the Woodruff family to Judge R.J. Cudney, an ardent preserver of Canadiana, on condition that he save the house. The judge sold the house to Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Doerr of Toronto, who were willing to do just that. They hired Finn Friis, a Norwegian architect who had assisted in the restoration of Fort York, to help them take the house apart, number each piece, bake oven and chimney included, and remove it all to the Orangeville area where they intended to rebuild it. The house was in excellent condition and only a couple of the 100 or so beams needed to be replaced. Mr. Friis sketched each room, nook and cranny as it was disassembled, eventually creating a blueprint to facilitate the rebuilding.

Unfortunately Douglas Doerr died before realizing his dream. The house was sold to the Chambers family from Bond Head, who had restored a number of houses. Years went by and the Chambers' realized they didn't have the energy left to tackle Woodruff House and it went up for sale again. And so an ad appeared in ACORN and caught the eye of Pete and Jane Rumgay.

The house moves east and waits to be reborn

In the summer of 2001 three tractor-trailers and Pete's pick-up truck rolled down the Highway 401. Inside were the hundreds of pieces that make up the Woodruff House. They now sit in expectant storage in Port Hope.

Soon Pete and Jane, who are passionate about saving and preserving old houses, will put all those pieces together again. After almost 35 years the Woodruff House will be reborn.

The ACO descends on Walkerton

Dan Schneider

On April 12 and 13, 2003 the annual conference and AGM were held in Walkerton, Ontario – for the first time in the history of the ACO! The conference theme was "Town Halls and Market Squares: Past, Present and Future Roles." About 60 people attended the weekend's activities.

Appropriately, the historic Victoria Jubilee Hall, Walkerton's former town hall, provided the setting for the opening reception Friday evening, the Saturday conference program and Sunday's annual general meeting.

On Saturday, the morning began with a welcome and opening remarks from ACO President Chris Borgal, followed by greetings from David Thomson, Mayor of Brockton (Brockton is the amalgamated municipality that now includes Walkerton).

The keynote address was given by Julia Munro, MPP for York North and Parliamentary Assistant to Culture Minister David Tsubouchi. Ms. Munro brought greetings from the Province and spoke about the provincial initiative currently underway to review and revise the Ontario Heritage Act. Ms. Munro has been leading the consultations on changes to the Act.

The program continued with a number of excellent presentations on the conference theme:

- Saving the Walkerton Town Hall – local ACO stalwarts Mary Robinson Ramsay and Ted Colbean gave a "tag team" presentation on the fascinating story of the fight to preserve Victoria Jubilee Hall
- The Woodstock Museum and the Woodstock Town Hall – former Woodstock Museum curator Sheila Johnson traced the many changes in use and appearance of Woodstock's town hall and market square from the 1850s to the present
- Relocating the Walkerville Town Hall – Windsor heritage consultant Stephen Marshall gave a spirited account of the



Scenes from the 2003 ACO conference weekend
 Photos courtesy Brian Dietrich

moving of the former Walkerville town hall and its restoration as corporate offices

- Risks Board to the new Toronto City Hall – ACO member Sharon Vattay reviewed the history of Nathan Phillips Square and drew attention to recent threats to the concept of the square as Toronto's central meeting space [see article in this issue].

Saturday's night's banquet took place in the old Hartley House Hotel with Terry Smith, Ontario's Deputy Minister of Culture, as guest speaker.

Weekend tours included a tour of Victoria

son and the rest of South Bruce-Grey ACO for a superb weekend all round!

Spring Walking Tour of Devil's Creek

Brian Dietrich

In early June the North Waterloo Region Branch of the ACO organized and led a tour of some 20 hikers along the newly established Devil's Creek trail (2002) in Cambridge (Galt).

Devil's Creek begins in North Dumfries Township and joins the Grand River just south of the historic Village of Blair. The watershed contains a cold-water fishery, where brook trout live and spawn, and two provincially significant wetland complexes, which compete with the growing subdivisions of the city of Cambridge.

Slobodanka Lekic, a member of the North Waterloo Region branch executive and architectural designer with the City of Cambridge, designed the trail. Slobodanka co-led the tour with

Bob McMullen, an avid naturalist and trails project steward in Cambridge.

Stream rehabilitation was a vital part of the project, thanks to the "Heritage River" designation of the Grand River and the on-

going stewardship work of the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA). Through the efforts of many partners, Devil's Creek has been restored to improve its natural beauty and place in the cultural landscape.

In this northern edge of the Carolinian Forest, upland areas sustain nationally rare plant species. While much of the area that surrounds Devil's Creek has been urbanized, it has high potential for recreational enjoyment and educational use. Old stone houses and farm related buildings are scattered through the landscape.

North Waterloo Region branch members and friends were very happy to walk the trail and celebrate the City of Cambridge's partnership with the Grand River Conservation Authority and their work in re-establishing another part of our natural heritage in Waterloo Region.

Province introduces changes to the Ontario Heritage Act

On June 25, 2003, the provincial government introduced amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act that would improve and strengthen heritage protection in Ontario.

"These are the first substantive amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act since it was enacted in 1975," said Culture Minister David Tsubouchi. "A stronger Ontario Heritage Act would give us more flexibili-



North Waterloo Region members examine displays during tour of Devil's Creek

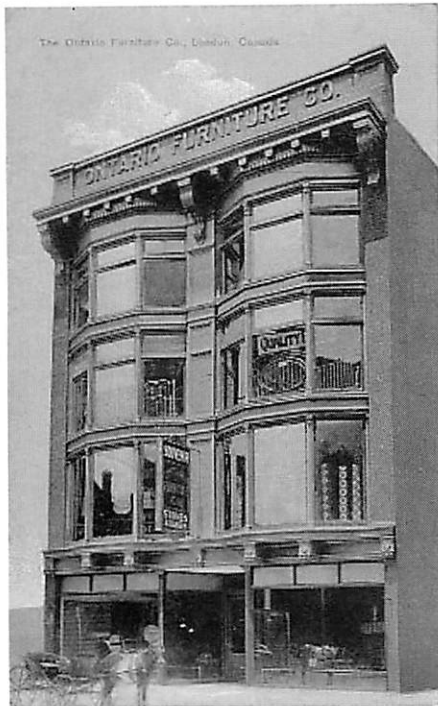
Photo: Bob McMullen

Jubilee Hall, a walking tour of Walkerton and a tour of the historic Neustadt brewery and Diefenbaker birthplace in nearby Neustadt.

Kudos to Conference Chair Henry Simp-

Joint ACO/CHO Conference in Hamilton, May 2004

ACO members please note... plans are underway for a joint conference of the ACO and Community Heritage Ontario in Hamilton next year. The Hamilton Region Branch will co-host the event, the first time the two organizations have held their annual conferences together. The weekend selected, May 14-16, 2004, falls between the usual conference times of the two organizations: the end of April for the ACO and end of May for CHO. Also note that the targeted weekend does not conflict with the Doors Open Hamilton and Toronto events (scheduled to take place the weekend before and the weekend after respectively).



Postcard of the Ontario Furniture Company Building in London, Ontario, postally used 1910. See article on page 6.

Illustration courtesy Ken Elder

ty to protect our rich cultural heritage for future generations. It would make Ontario one of the leading jurisdictions in heritage conservation in the country.”

The amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act were developed in consultation with heritage organizations, municipalities, developers, property owners and the real estate industry, as well as other ministries, agencies and interested groups.

There have been no substantive amendments to Ontario Heritage Act since its inception in 1975. A review of the act with extensive stakeholder participation was conducted in the late 1980s and early 1990s, but the resulting proposals for change were not acted upon.

A number of amendments were made to the Act as part of last fall’s Government Efficiency Act. These amendments clarified, updated, and improved the consistency of provisions in the act. They ensured marine heritage was specifically covered by the act and improved the protection of architectural heritage, including

an increase in fines for the illegal demolition of designated buildings.

The current amendments would further strengthen the government’s leadership role in heritage preservation and include the following changes to improve heritage protection:

Powers to designate provincially significant built heritage:

- Minister of Culture would be enabled to designate heritage property of provincial significance.

Standards and guidelines for identifying and protecting provincially owned heritage property that is deemed provincially significant:

- Ontario would develop mandatory standards and guidelines, in consultation with affected ministries and agencies, for the identification and protection of provincially significant heritage property owned or controlled by the Province.

Increased protection for significant marine heritage sites:

- Ontario would be given the power to protect the most significant marine heritage sites.
- Access without a licence to about a dozen of the most fragile marine heritage sites would be regulated, such as those containing human remains.

Standard designation criteria and other improvements to the municipal designation process:

- Standard designation criteria would be developed in consultation with other ministries, municipalities, developers and heritage stakeholders.
- Such criteria would help ensure quality control and consistency in designations, while allowing municipalities to interpret and apply the criteria as appropriate to address local needs.

Measures to streamline and strengthen protection of heritage conservation districts:

- Heritage conservation districts would be required to have a plan in place to help ensure better, and more consistent, management of changes in the district.

Updated and streamlined agency provisions for the Ontario Heritage Foundation and Conservation Review Board:

- The name of the Ontario Heritage Foundation would be changed to the Ontario Heritage Trust to better reflect its mandate to hold heritage properties in trust for Ontarians.
- The powers of the Conservation Review Board would be updated to make them consistent with those of other regulatory tribunals.

The government says these changes to the Ontario Heritage Act would help build strong communities by promoting quality of life, civic pride, cultural tourism and lo-



Postcard with aerial view of Cove Island Lighthouse, off Tobermory, Ontario, 1960s. See article on page 6.

Illustration courtesy Ken Elder

cal economic development.

The legislation, Bill 124, can be examined on line at: http://www.ontla.on.ca/documents/Bills/37_Parliament/Session4/b124.pdf

The legislation was not passed when the Legislature rose for the summer, and its fate may depend on whether an election is called for the fall.

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